Suffolk-Nansemond Historical Society
Post Office Box 1255
Suffolk, Virginia 23434

WINTER - 1990

NEWSLETTER

CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 17 - Business Meeting at 10:30 a.m. at The Peanut Gallery

FEBRUARY 24 - Lafayette Dinner at Riddick's Folly

APRIL 21 - Nansemond River Garden Club Tour in Surry

MAY 13 - 19 - Preservation Week

MAY 28 - Memorial Day Observance at Cedar Hill Cemetery

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WINTER MEETING - FEBRUARY 17, 1990

No minutes

For a change of pace and atmosphere, we are holding the annual business/winter meeting of the Suffolk Nansemond Historical Society at The Peanut Gallery (located one mile north of Holland on Route 58) Saturday, February 17th, 1990. This will be a combination lunch/program/workshop with the program/workshop commencing at 10:30 a.m., with lunch at 12:00 p.m. followed by a very brief business meeting. The entire meeting and program should be through no later than 1:00 p.m.

Becky Ritter, Executive Director of Riddick's Folly, will talk to us about how Riddick's Folly is funded and the kinds of programs it offers. She will also be on hand to answer any questions we might have regarding the renewal of our contract with Riddick's Folly.

Ron Aston, a local real estate broker and developer, has recently restored a farmhouse on Holland Corner Road, known as Boot Strap Manor. Ron, who together with Pret Pretlow, restored the Dundalow Station Post Office Building on North Main Street, will share with us the details of his restoration of Boot Strap Manor.

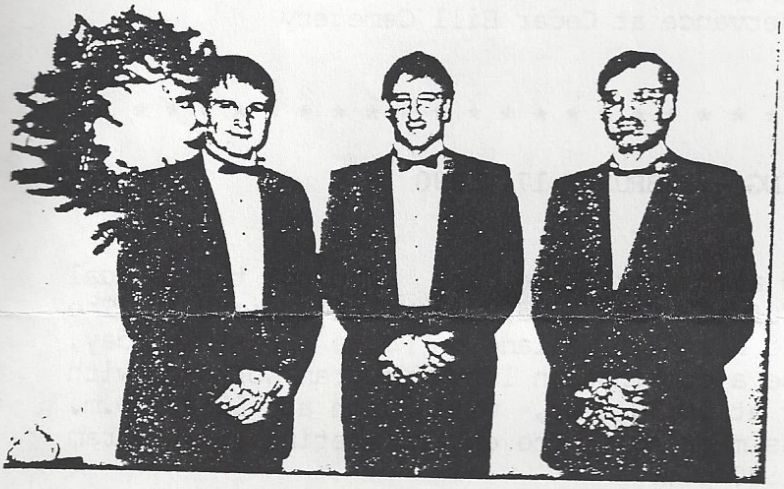
Ron, who also serves as President of Preservation of Historic Suffolk, Inc. will be able to inform us of the status of the Norfolk Welder's Building (adjacent to The Luke House).

As seating will be limited to 30 people, please call Faye at Moore and Saunders in order to reserve a place for you (934-1313). The cost to you will be $6.05, which will include the cost of the meal, tax and gratuity. The menu is brunswick stew, two ham biscuits, peanut pie and beverage.

We look forward to seeing you at this time!

The cooks: Robert Babb, Sandra Joyner, Charles and Kim Parr, Betty and Jack Ellison.

The hostesses: Jeanna Chapman, and Miriam Birdsong (not pictured - Jane Moore)



The waiters: Bob Chapman, Everett Birdsong and Charles Henderson

NOT PICTURED

Bartenders - Kate Van Pelt and Jim Moore

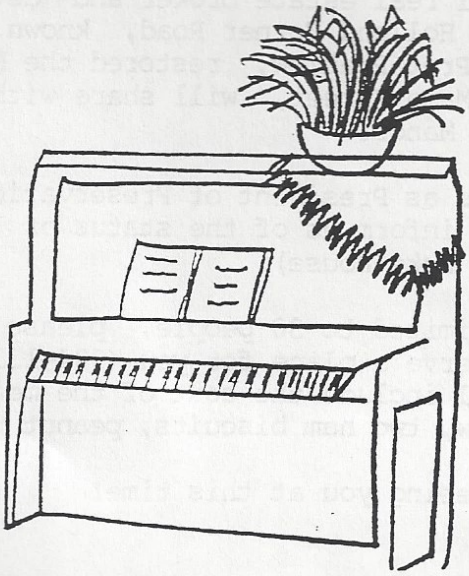
Wine Steward - Tom Woodward

Cleaning Crew - Cheryl Pisani, Cathy Osterman and Sue Woodward

Doormen - Vic Pisani, Nathan Osterman and Gary Buth

Piano Players

Kay Gillette
Judy Henry
Jimmy Darden
Jimmy Pond
Henry Simpson



CANDLELIGHT TOUR

December 3rd dawned sunny but cold and windy, but the cold did not seem to be much of a bother for the approximately 200 people who toured Downtown Suffolk that day. Many of those guests were fortified by an excellent lunch buffet at Beth's Restaurant or hot peanuts roasted on the spot by Alvah Wilcox and hot cider served by Cathy Osterman, Cheryl Pisani, and Mollie Felton.

Thanks to the building owners, the house chairmen and hostesses, the decorators, the musicians, Dr. Lloyd March, Crestar Bank, City of Suffolk, the Main Street Program and many more people than we can list for all the help we received. We especially thank the Bank of Suffolk for their very generous help in paying for our brochures.

Erskine Watkins and Mrs. F. Whitney (Judith Brewer) Godwin chat about times past at the Palm Court of Suffolk Towers. [Picture courtesy of Suffolk Sun]

What a grand time we had at the Palm Court in December! Thanks to excellent volunteer chefs, clean-up volunteers, handsome waiters and greeters, piano players, decorators, . . . this list could go on and on. Suffice to say a fine time was had by all, especially, we believe, our sixty paying guests.

The Marquis de Lafayette returns to Suffolk on February 24. For the second year we look forward to commemorating this happy event that occurred in 1825. In that year Lafayette came through Suffolk as part of his triumphant tour of the nation he had helped to create in the American Revolution forty-five years before.

The French hero was honored in many ways. Children were named for him. (Mrs. Mills Riddick bore a child later that year who would be named Washington Lafayette Riddick.) Cities, such as Fayetteville, North Carolina, were named for him as well. Entertainments were held in every town that he visited.

The people of Suffolk were notified the night before the arrival of the honored guest and, reportedly, much of the citizenry stayed up all night making preparation for a banquet in his honor. The General stayed at the Castle Inn (now the location of Young Properties), the banquet was served at the Court House, and Mills Riddick who lived next door was Master of Ceremonies. The Court House, the Riddick and the Castle Inn were all destroyed in the great fire of 1837. The Court House and the Riddick House were rebuilt on the same site as the previous ones. We will hold our dinner in the house Mr. Riddick built after the fire, Riddick's Folly.

The dinner was held on the night of February twenty-fifth and the next day the honored guest left for Murfreesboro, North Carolina. General Lafayette and his Suffolk escort journeyed to Somerton where they dined at Washington Smith's inn. (Today that inn is the home of one of our members, Mrs. Bruce Arthur, whose late husband was a descendent of that innkeeper.)

Black tie is the dress for our dinner. Make your reservations as soon as possible as space will be limited.

General LaFayette in later life as he would have appeared during his visit.